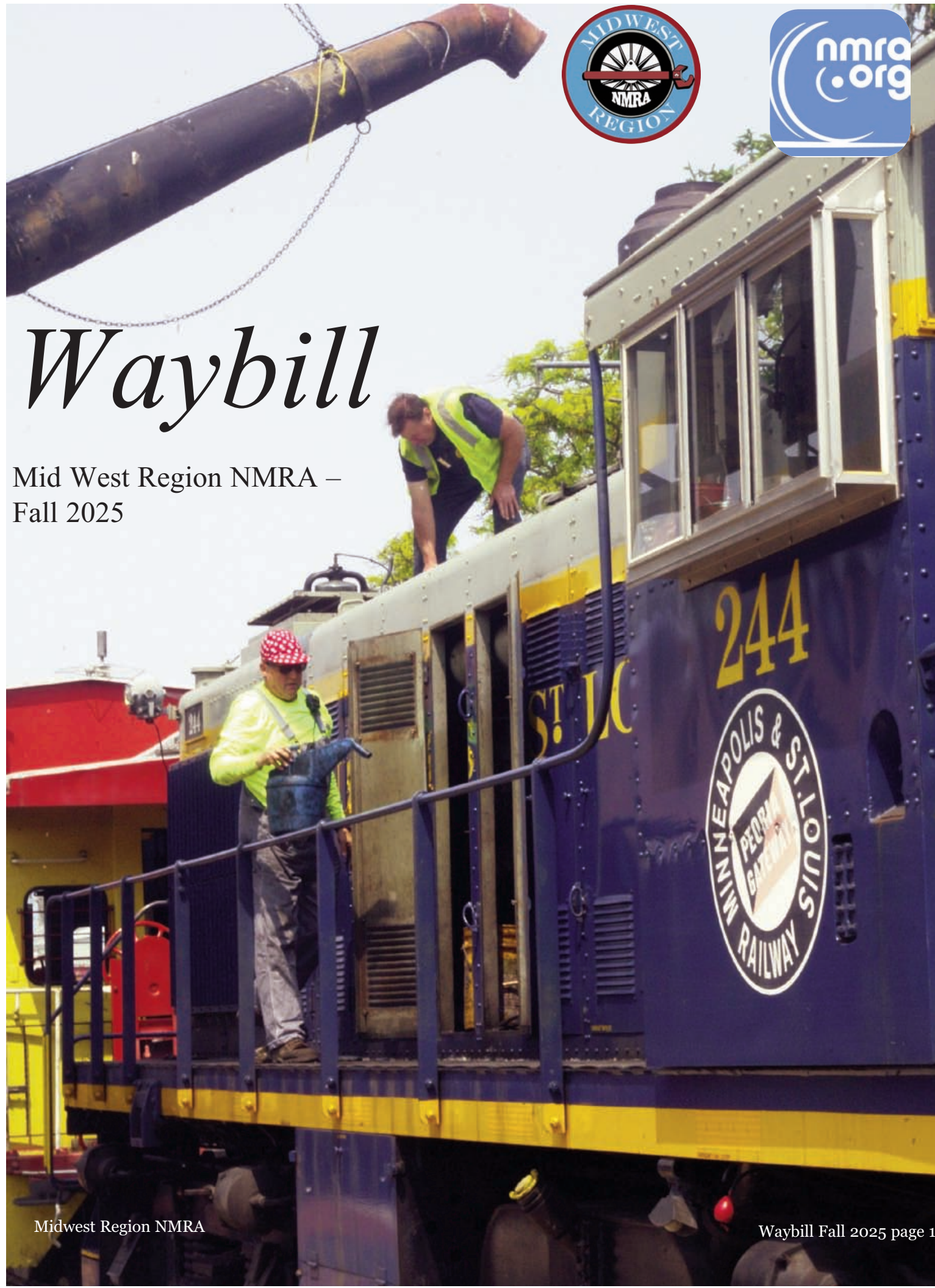




Waybill

Mid West Region NMRA –
Fall 2025



The *WAYBILL*

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Editor's Musings

Congratulations to Burnell
Breaker for receiving the NMRA
Special Recognition Award in 2024
for services to the NMRA, Midwest
Region and the WISE Division. I
have known Burnell for many years
and there is not a more deserving
person.

As mentioned previously,
TrainFest® returns to the Baird
Center in downtown Milwaukee on
November 1-2, 2025. Hope to see
you there.



ON THE COVER

Photo was taken at the Boone &
Scenic Valley Railroad & Museum.
Alco RS-1 #244 was built in 1951 for
the LS&I. It then went to Continental
Grain in Pickering, Iowa, then to the
museum. Here we see it taking on
water under the water column.

RIP Connie Coy MMR

My condolences to the family of
Connie Coy MMR whom lost her battle
with cancer recently. See more on pages
9-10.

I recently checked off a bucket list
item, riding the Durango & Silverton
Railroad in Colorado. A teaser is below
showing loco #482 easing out of Durango.
More coverage will be in the next issue.

I also found time to write a second edi-
tion to my "Pickle & Vinegar Makers of the

Midwest" book. It
had been sold out
for a few years and
when I saw used
copies selling for
between \$175-
\$100 on the after-
market, I thought it
was time to do an
expanded 2nd edi-
tion. This is a great
book about two
interesting Midwest
industries.

Additionally I
am working on the
Soo Line Historical

& Technical Society convention in the
Wisconsin Dells on September 11-14.
Room is still available and you do not
need to be a member to join. The highlight
of the convention will be a tour of the Mid-
Continent Railway Museum in North
Freedom, Wisconsin. C&NW #1385 will
be there for viewing.

President's Report (John's Junction)

John Coy MMR president, MWR



There is a whole lot of shaking going on in the world of the NMRA! Including the 90th SOLD-OUT Convention!!! The North Central Region and Convention Chairman Scott Kramer (also a member of the Great Northern Railway Historical Society) knocked this

one out of the park!

This was so much fun, very well organized and there was so much to do that any one person couldn't possibly do everything! They even gave the presenters, layout operators and layout tour hosts a really nice plaque!



In addition, our National Achievement Program Chairman Ray Pershing was presented his MMR plaque and certificate by NMRA President Gordy Robinson.

And so that you don't find yourself in the unfortunate position as many did this time around, REGISTER for the 2026 Convention in Chattanooga, NOW!!! Today. Don't get left out, again.

NOTE: A brand new NMRA Logo will come out September 2nd. It will be "universal" meaning that there will be ONLY ONE NMRA Logo; so please take a good look at some brand new region shirts that we



Ray Pershing MMR being presented a plaque by Gordy Robinson MMR.



paid for personally to make ourselves readily identifiable at the convention which will be obsolete shortly.

Before I begin, a friendly reminder: If you are contacted via email or text supposedly by me, or any other Board Member, asking you for money, gift cards, electronic transfer of funds, etc., there is a 100% chance it is fraudulent scheme. If or whenever in doubt, always, always, always, contact me, directly



MWR executive committee, with new NMRA logo shirts.

from the MWR Website and inquire if you have any doubt at all. Unfortunately, this scam has happened before, multiple times. BE AWARE! It will happen again. I myself have received multiple scam emails very recently.

MWR Vice President Bob Perry MMR and I traveled to Downers Grove, IL to present Ron Sharping a very nice plaque for years and years of faithful service as Membership Chairman! Thank you to all the DuPage Members for helping to surprise and honor Ron! What a fun day and we got to visit two model railroads at Ron's place, where he and others are having a good time!



John Coy MMR, Ron Sharping and Bob Perry MMR.

COMING UP VERY SHORTLY!!!

SPECIAL EVENT: ALL NMRA MEMBERS ARE WELCOME!

NMRA 90TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION.

Monday, September 1st, 2025 at 11 a.m. Eastern time. That date, Sept. 1, Labor Day, is the day the

NMRA was created in 1935.

Where? At the MCL CAFE 1390 Keystone Way East, Carmel, IN

Special guest speakers:

Fred Soward, Central District Director and Ray Persing MMR, AP National Chairman

Event to begin at 11 a.m. which is the opening time for the MCL CAFETERIA.

We will have opening remarks, followed by our guest speakers.

We will have lunch immediately afterwards.

All those present are invited to the home of Master Model Railroader Dan Hinel (#700), who owns a world-class, HO scale, model railroad, which is one of the largest privately-owned model railroad layouts you will ever see. It is INCREDIBLY IMPRESSIVE! Dan routinely hosts operating sessions year round.

Next subject: Our MWR Constitution and By-Laws. I, along with the assistance of the entire MWR Board, and an experienced member, are in the process of updating our MWR Constitution and By-Laws. Currently as written, both refer to the NMRA Regulations and Executive Handbook—both which were phased out years ago. We will be voting on the updates on both documents at our November 2025 meeting.



Field trip! We have already held our FIRST Regional FIELD TRIP event at the Linden, Indiana Depot Museum.

Our second FIELD TRIP event will be the 90th Anniversary celebration written above. In 2026, we are working on two events in Illinois.

And of course still this year 2025, there is NMRA TRAINFEST in November at Milwaukee. I

strongly encourage all Midwest Region members to attend and YES, this will be our Region's third FIELD TRIP!!!

NMRA President Gordy Robinson MMR is fully behind supporting TRAINFEST which is the gem of all NMRA shows! Since this is the birthplace of the NMRA and on our home turf, I absolutely consider this our THIRD FIELD TRIP for all MWR members. We should all be there in force supporting all of our region volunteers. It is a great show and please volunteer!

“Ask Someone to Join the NMRA.” It is been my personal experience that a person is more apt to join the NMRA if you ask them face-to-face. The most effective means of increasing our membership is by each member asking someone to join.

Can you imagine what would happen if every member got one person to join each year? I have belonged to the NMRA since August of 2018 and I have gotten better than an average of one person per year to join the NMRA. Please ask someone!

I have assembled and written a history compilation for the NMRA National, the Central Indiana Division, and am presently working on one for the Midwest Region. Membership was a common theme in many articles and the number one way people have joined the NMRA is when a current member asked them!

Ask all your friends to come join us! Take them to our events. The social aspect of this hobby was one of the two main reasons that the NMRA was created. We are having good times and meeting good people and learning new things. We need to get the word out! The more the merrier.

The model railroading manufacturers continue to put out more and more items and our National Train Show was PACKED!!! Model railroading is the greatest hobby and the NMRA for 90 years now has played a vital role in developing hobby standards. You are an important piece of a great organization!

The next MWR BoD meeting will be held via the on-line Zoom application on Saturday, Nov. 3, 2025 at 9:00 am CDT. The meeting log-in credentials will be distributed by email to the BoD members approximately 1 week before the meeting. If you wish to participate as a guest, please contact the MWR Webmaster at:

mwr.nmra.webmaster@gmail.com with your request.

Region News

Midwest Region Achievement Program Report

by Jim Landwehr- MWR AP Manager

I am happy to report that there has been a lot of activity from our members. They continue to take part in the Achievement Program all over the Midwest Region.

The following members received awards:

Dan Brewer	Granger, IN	Civil
Dan Brewer	Granger, IN	Scenery
Dan Brewer	Granger, IN	Electrical
Mark Willmering	Wauwatosa, WI	Electrical
Robert Perry MMR	Avon, IN	Official
David Mashino	Kokomo, IN	Official
Gregg Burks	Plainfield, IN	Volunteer

As always, work with your division Achievement Program Manager first, and if there is a problem, feel free to contact me.

Thanks,
Jim

A MONUMENTAL DEED INDEED!!!

Ronald A. Sharping, MWR Membership Chairman Emeritus

By John Coy MMR MWR President

The National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) has been blessed on a few occasions with OVERACHIEVER volunteers. There was Bob Bast, who served as Secretary of the NMRA for 26.5 years. There was Tom Draper, who served as NMRA Treasurer for 27 years.

Today, this year, 2025, we here in the Midwest Region (MWR) celebrate Mr. Ronald A. Sharping of Illinois, who has completed in the area of twenty-five (25) years of outstanding service to the hobby; as even Ron is uncertain as to exactly when he started. It is safe to say for decades!

I first learned that Ron was the MWR Membership Chairman upon being elected and seated on the Board as a Director-at-Large (DAL) in May

of 2019. I didn't realize at that time how long he had already served.

Fast forward to 2024, when I learned from Bob McGeever that Ron was going to "step down" as MWR Membership Chairman in May of 2025. I suggested to Bob McGeever that Ron deserved a statue for all his hard work!

For those of you who may not understand, the MWR membership has probably fluctuated (a complete guess) between 1200 to 1800 Members in these past 25 years. In addition to the number of people (names) to account for, the Membership Chairman has to update membership types, addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, expiration dates, etc. In short, this isn't a walk in the park. This is a HUGE task and commitment even for a short term and Ron has done it two decades plus!

In May of 2025, I, and my good friend, Dr. Robert J. Perry, were elected as MWR President and Vice-President respectively. I already knew that I wanted to do something special for Ron. That became, with approval from the newly seated MWR Executive Committee, a very nice plaque acknowledging Ron and recognizing him for his many years of service.

Sometimes, "Thank you" is not nearly enough. And in this particular case, was certainly not nearly enough. In addition, I felt strongly that it was only right and proper to present Ron with his plaque in person. However, I wanted it to be a complete surprise. But, how?

Ron lives in a beautiful senior community in northern Illinois. It is about a 3.5-hour drive from central Indiana. Therefore, I wanted to be certain Ron would be there. I contacted the Executive Director of this senior community, Dan, who was very pleased when I told him of the plan. I was surprised that Dan knew Ron and his wife, Sue, as this community is HUGE! Dan said that Ron is one of the most kind and gracious people you will ever meet.

Dan volunteered to speak with Sue to arrange a time when she could ensure Ron would be available. Sue was of the utmost help and was instrumental in not "letting the cat out of the bag."

On Thursday, June 5, 2025, Robert Perry, and I started out from central Indiana and arrived in northern Illinois several hours later. I want to thank Alex Schneider, DuPage Division Superintendent (and a DAL), for getting me in touch with Bill Dzral, DuPage Division Assistant Superintendent, because Bill has

known Ron "since the 1980s." I love it when a plan comes together! My whole purpose for reaching out to Ron's DuPage Division was to find his close associates.

Bill took over from there and arranged where we would meet. Further, Bill got in touch with other members in the DuPage Division to ask them to come and celebrate Ron's monumental achievement. We had many folks from the DuPage Division come including: Dave Lull, Kim Schlytter, Jim Marciniak, Bill Dzral, Tim Schubert, and Patrick Golden.

A very special thank you!!! goes to Jim Marciniak and Tim Schubert, who both took photographs! I am thrilled to have a photo of Ron with his plaque; (photo on page 4) while Robert Perry and myself are flanking him at the presentation! Ron was totally and completely surprised. When he first laid eyes on me that day, Ron said: "What are you doing here?"

It was wonderful to have all but one member in attendance from the DuPage Division in a photo with Ron! And of course, Sue and Ron are proudly pictured together! I can't thank Sue enough for making this a surprise that I'm confident Ron will never forget!

If all that isn't great enough, I learned from Dan, Executive Director, that Ron had been instrumental and played a huge part in a new model railroad club that is located in the basement of this senior community where Ron and Sue live!

Our group got the grand tour of the layouts. Ron lead us and told us all about these layouts; one is N scale and the other is HO. Several non-resident model railroad club members were also on hand that day and by chance got to see Ron's beautiful plaque.

CONGRATULATIONS TO RONALD A. SCHARPING!!! He is one of the greatest volunteers ever in the history of the NMRA / MWR. Ron is a proud symbol of excellence and dedication!

Important!

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mwr.nmra.webmaster@gmail.com

The Pacific & Eastern Railroad A Gem Tucked Away in Greencastle, Indiana

by John Robert Coy, MMR™ 730

There are so many great and interesting things going on in the Midwest Region; that unfortunately you are just never going to know or hear about. Our Region covers Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana and western Kentucky. That is a fair amount of real estate, and a bunch of ground to cover!

This story actually started at my church many years ago when I met Rod Weinschenk at St. Stephens' Lutheran Church in Plainfield, Indiana. We saw each other on a fairly regular basis, and neither of us ever happened on the subject of model railroading.

One day, many years ago, I was sitting in the Narthex and gazing at my model railroading magazine. By chance, Rod saw me and the rest is history. Rod told me that he had N scale trains and explained how he painted and detailed N scale figures. How do you see them? That was my question.

I invited Rod over to Connie and my O Scale Glacier Line layout which uses 3-rail track in a realistic setting—Marías Pass in the area of Glacier National Park. It wasn't long until Rod became a core member of our Glacier Line Crew operating and even earning the AP Chief Dispatcher certificate! Rod, and his wife Staci, began buying more and more O gauge model trains.

Somewhere, somehow, someway, Rod became involved with a modular 3-rail club, The Pacific & Eastern. This group has been around a long while and brings their layout to display at NMRA shows.



This club was very fortunate to have had Rod become involved as there were issues that needed to be addressed and it seemed like fate sent Rod to this club. Rod became this club's President and he even managed to get the club a space to set-up the layout in the Putnam County Museum. The museum is located on the north edge of Greencastle at 1105 N. Jackson Street, Greencastle.

I was inspired to write this to make more people aware that a good-sized model railroad club is based in Greencastle, Indiana. You just never know.



In mid-May 2025, approximately 90 South Putnam Elementary 2nd graders, adult escorts, and teachers toured the museum. Rod provided them some education and entertainment with an operating session of sorts.

Quote of the day! It came from one of the kids: *"This is the greatest day of my life, these trains!"* Truly, it is a great day when the National Model



Railroad Association can “bring” model railroading to children.

It is a blessing that NMRA member Rod Weinschenk, who is also the Regional Chairman of the Audit Committee, and also the President of the Pacific & Eastern Railroad, managed to get the Putnam County Museum to provide a space for the club.

Greencastle has a long railroad history which is on display and available at the museum.

Countless people, including many children, have been exposed to model railroading due to the tremendous efforts of NMRA member Rod Weinschenk. He is a great Ambassador for the hobby and NMRA!

The only bad thing is Rod doesn't get to the Glacier Line nearly as much as he used to. The Crew misses him here, but he has done himself proud and brought the Pacific & Eastern Railroad to Greencastle, where many folks have enjoyed it tremendously.

If you are close to Greencastle or will be passing through, look up the Pacific & Eastern Railroad club and stop in! Or, look for the club at many NMRA Midwest Region train shows!

This is a very friendly and good group of people! Many of whom are NMRA Members! I wonder if I could convince the club to become an NMRA club? That's a story for another day.

**CONGRATULATIONS TO ROD WEIN-
SCHENK!!!**

Thank you for promoting the hobby to young and old!



NMRA Special Recognition Award by Mike Hirvela MidWest Region Director-At-Large

Annually at the annual convention, the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) recognizes those members who contribute their time, talent and skills to improve their local division, which therefore enhances the member's experience as an NMRA member.

In the Spring of the year, the NMRA President announces nominations for a national award to recognize those members who have contributed above and beyond just being 'a plain ol' member.' Nominations are provided by the division superintendents to their respective Region board, who in turn, nominate one person from the Region for such recognition to the National administration.

The awards are approved at a meeting of the National Board of Directors in advance of the national convention. The national awards are read aloud at the annual convention banquet that included members from six countries, six provinces, and 44 states.

This year, Midwest Region nominated one individual in recognition of his efforts to keep member interest in his division while diligently working to return the division to active status after a tumultuous couple of months that saw a high turnover of division leadership positions and possible fracture of the division membership along loyalty lines. Not wanting to



Burnell Breaker with his award.

see a historic division cease, this individual took on the leadership role as Interim Superintendent and proceeded to set a course to success, returning the division to active status. Additionally, he also helped lay the groundwork for the NMRA to operate TrainFest as a national train show. These efforts resulted in his nomination for a national award.

This year's awarded from the MidWest Region is WISE Division Superintendent, Burnell Breaker of Racine, Wisconsin.
Well Deserved, Burnie.

Obituary for Connie Sue (Jones) Coy 1952 to 2025

Connie Sue (Jones) Coy was born in Wayne, Nebraska on November 2, 1952 to Earl Ross Jones and Fern Emma (Hesemann) Jones. The youngest of three children, she and her siblings; Judy Ann (Jones) Richards and Kenneth Earl Jones lived on a farm south of Wayne. In 1955, her family moved into Wayne as her dad made the transition from farming to housing construction and carpentry.

Connie attended Hahn Schools from Kindergarten through Fifth Grade. Hahn was affiliated with Wayne State Teachers College, (later Wayne State College.) The school was a training ground for student teachers and Hahn was more like some of today's charter schools. It was there that Connie learned to love learning and began her life-long love of music. In the Third Grade she learned to play the Violin and performed in the Elementary School

Orchestra.

Through her growing years, Connie learned many instruments: piano, clarinet, oboe, cymbals and glockenspiel. She sang in choirs at church and school into her adult life. Throughout High School, she played in the marching band, concert band and orchestra. She also was a self-taught guitarist, having taken it up when she fell in love with the Beatles in the early 1960s.

Connie moved to Florida and worked as a dental assistant, went to college at Florida Atlantic University and then felt the call to ministry. She attended a seminary in Ohio and served different parishes but ultimately shifted to chaplaincy.



Connie was the Director of Pastoral Care for St. Vincent Hospital in Billings, Montana and also for the Community Health Network in Indianapolis all while still performing chaplain duties.

Connie met her husband John Coy at the Indianapolis Museum of Art on April 5th of 1991. Shortly thereafter moving to Billings, Montana, where her son Joseph was born. Connie had 40+ years of service in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

On her honeymoon in 1991 is when Connie and her husband discovered their enthusiasm for model trains! That is too long of a story to tell but the ending was Connie is only one of twelve women ever to earn the distinction of Master Model Railroader (#763) by the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA). Connie was an Executive Officer for the





Midwest Region of the NMRA.

Connie was truly a light that brightened every room she entered and every life she touched. Her dedication to our hobby and organization was unwavering, and we were blessed to spend time with her and husband John at this year's convention in Novi, where her enthusiasm and joy shone as brightly as ever.

As both a pastor and Master Model Railroader, Connie brought compassion, wisdom, and excellence to everything she did. Her contributions to the NMRA will be remembered and cherished for years to come.

In addition to all her other activities, in retirement, Connie was a lead singer, lead guitar player and co-manager for her and her husband's own band: the Glacier Line Jammers Band. Connie had performed hundreds of performances including one two weeks prior to her passing. Connie had also delivered a sermon on July 6th, 2025 at her church, a few weeks before her passing.

The week prior to her passing she attended the NMRA National Convention in Novi, Michigan. She was determined to keep right on going regardless. She fought bravely and with great courage!

She was survived by: John (husband), Joseph (son), Judy (Sister) and Ken Jones (Brother) and Patti Lynn Ortiz (Sister-in-law), and numerous cousins, nieces and nephews scattered throughout the US.

Prototype for Anything by David J. Leider MMR

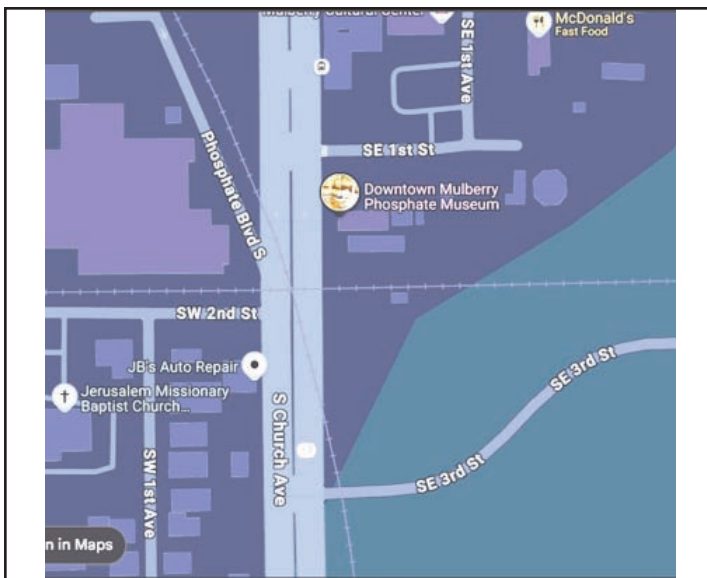
I ran across this railroad crossing built in a road crossing in Mulberry, Florida. The rails belong to CSX, which has a lot of trackage in the area. It is often called Bone Valley due to the enormous amount of phosphate rock that is mined in the area, all the remains of bones from dinosaurs millions of years old.

The highway is Florida 37 and there are two cross streets coming from the west, Phosphate Blvd. and West Second Street.



Above: Looking west. Second Street is to the left of the tracks.

Below: Map of the crossing and nearby buildings. The Downtown Mulberry Phosphate Museum is where the NMRA was visiting.





Above: looking north.



Above: Also looking north. The diamond is in the median for easier maintenance.

The reason for the visit was the Western Division of the Suncoast Region of the NMRA field trip to the Downtown Mulberry Phosphate Museum. It is located in the city's original railroad depot. Exhibitions include fossils, memorabilia and exhibits about the phosphate mining industry.



A Porter centercab locomotive belonging to phosphate miner Mosaic and a Seaboard Coast Line caboose were on display in Mulberry at the museum.

Chicago & North Western Historical Society Convention by David J. Leider MMR

The Chicago & North Western Railroad Historical Society held its annual convention in Des Moines, Iowa in late May. The principal attraction was a visit to the Boone & Scenic Valley Railroad & Museum. It is a very nice, well maintained museum with a choice of two train rides; on a trolley, or diesel excursion over the nearby Des Moines River.



Our first trip was via trolley, where we traveled into Boone to view the depot and the former freight



Charles City Western car 50 was built by the McGuire-Cummings Company of Paris, Illinois in 1915.



C&NW #X-12517, an open platform car was a former transfer caboose.



GMD FP9A #6540 was built in Canada for EMD in 1958 and received by the Canadian National of June that year. In later years it was used by Canada's VIA Rail passenger system until 1991. It was purchased by the museum in 2002 and painted into a C&NW inspired paint scheme, but keeping its number 6540.



Wisconsin & Southern no. 751 was a GP9R built in November 1956 for the Minneapolis & St. Louis Railway as #603. It became C&NW #603, then Fox River Valley #4304 before going to the Wisconsin & Southern.



Above: Our Excursion train getting ready to depart.
Left: Dennis Eggert MMR, it looking over their Trackmobile. Maybe he is wondering how he could kit-bash it.



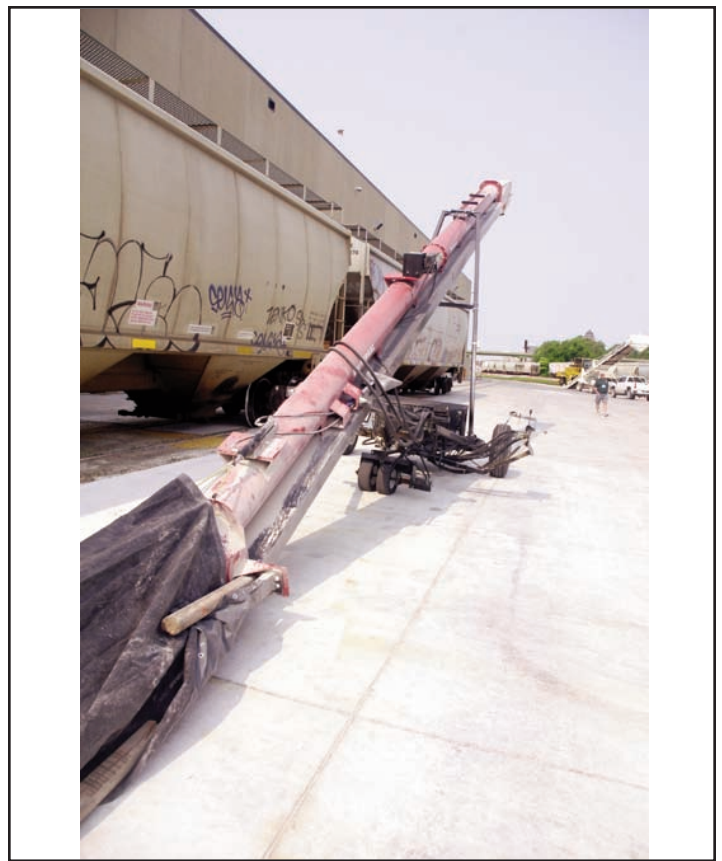
house. After visiting the museum, it was time for our excursion. The track was well maintained as we "sped" along, enjoying the scenery. We had several cars to ourselves, giving ample room to talk and catch up with folks I had not seen for 5 years.

The next day was spent railfanning the Des Moines area. Fortunately (as I did not have a car) I was able to hook up with other railfans to explore. Later we visited the transload operation of Des

Moines Industrial. What had been an abandoned rail-yard in a low-lying area was transformed into an important industry for the city. The \$25million dollar project includes a 115,000 sq ft warehouse with office space, paved transloading aprons and site improvements. The facility is adjacent to three Class I (BNSF, UP and NS) and one Class II (Iowa Interstate) rail lines, which is a rare site consideration nationally. It created an opportunity for goods distribution via truck and rail transloading for Des Moines as well as the State of Iowa. The facility handles just about every category of rail freight: dry bulk, building materials, heavy equipment, agriculture, consumer, containers, recyclable, etc. It currently has 15,500 linear feet of track with room for more.

The facility opened in February 2022, with the ability to expand the warehouse by 80,000 sq. ft..

Right: One of many bulk unloaders on the property. All photos by the author.



The Frugal Modeler NMRA Speedrail Tragedy by Dave Nelson

September 2, 2025, marks the 75th anniversary of the greatest disaster ever to befall the hobby of model railroading, and indeed one of the worst, if not the worst, tragedies in the history of organized railfanning in general: the head-on collision between two electric interurban trains filled with about 200 of the NMRA members attending the NMRA's 15th anniversary convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Ten people died, and some 47 were injured, some grievously. Even today, the exact cause of the collision is a matter of dispute and controversy.

For many years Milwaukee had one of the premiere inte-

grated electric transportation systems in the nation, encompassing city streetcars, far-reaching suburban service, fast interurban railroading, and freight and express service, under the general ownership of the major electric utility, The Milwaukee Electric Railway & Light Company. Starting in the 1920s, better streets and the private automobile made major inroads into

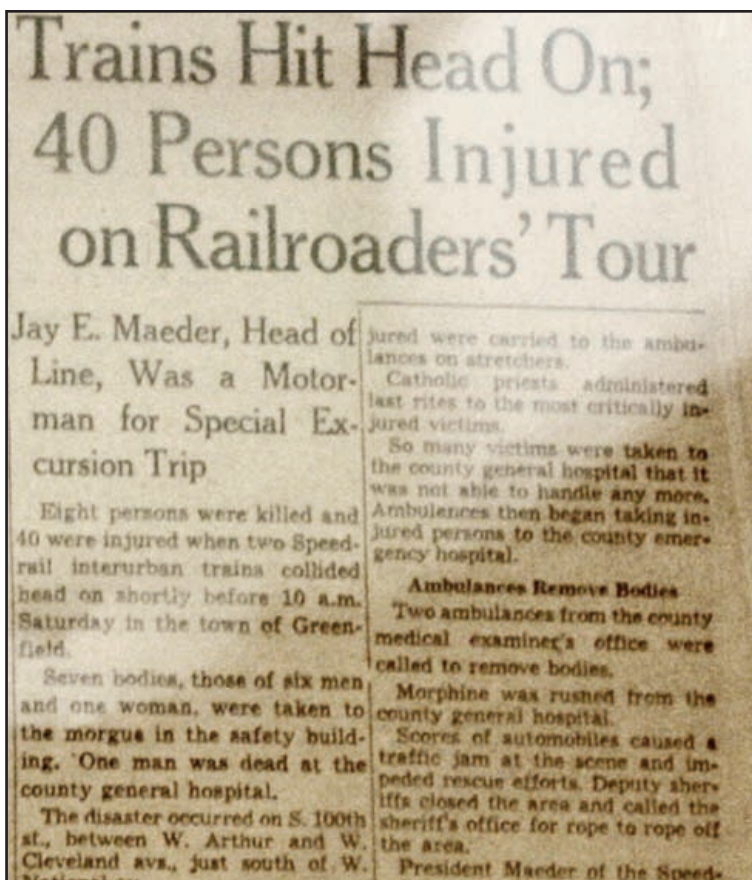
the viability of such large systems, and New Deal-era "reforms" sought to eliminate the linkage of electric transportation with electric utility ownership. The transport company that resulted had a goal of converting to buses for suburban and most city routes, although portions of the streetcar system



lingered into the 1950s. In the late 1940s, Jay Maeder, a Cleveland businessman and railfan, acquired key portions of the interurban route and equipment, trimmed the line to a core system, and renamed it Speedrail. Maeder sought to give the system a fresh image by buying up more modern-looking used equipment from downsized systems around the country, sometimes even knowingly not paying Speedrail's insurance premiums to fund new acquisitions. But not all the purchases were the bargains they seemed to be, and Speedrail in 1950 was running a mix of elderly but reliable TMER&L heavyweight coaches and what might now be called "light rail" passenger cars. It was this mix that was to prove so fatal that Labor Day weekend.

The NMRA convention arranged for a total of 5 round trips on Speedrail on Saturday, September 2. To minimize interference with regular trains on the "core" line west to Waukesha, the special trips left Milwaukee and diverted at 92nd Street to the secondary line south to Hales Corners. Only the northern part of this line was double track, and there were many grades and curves to contend with, but the system was fully signaled (the Nachod System popular with many interurban systems) and many special precautions were in place. Three of the five NMRA trips were run without incident, even though all special trains were running behind schedule due to many photo run-bys as well as delays due to the special safety precautions that required motormen to call in before passing important sidings and meetings points.

A heavy TM articulated, nos.1192-93, was on its second round trip heading south towards Hales Corners. Lightweight articulated nos.39-40 was under



the control of owner Jay Maeder himself, with a regular motorman at the ready, and a large crowd of standing railfans were peppering Maeder with questions.

The 39-40 was already behind schedule when it turned at Hales Corners and headed back north, stopping at a passing siding where the dispatcher was contacted per the special rules of the day. The signal for the remaining single track run to West Junction was--allegedly --permissive and north of the grade crossing at Cleveland Ave. Maeder began to accelerate for the grade to elevated right-of-way and to

make up lost time. But in fact that block was already occupied by 1192-93. Curves and the grade, and perhaps the distractions of a large crowd of railfans caused Maeder, the other Speedrail employees, and passengers from seeing the 1192-1193 until it was just a few hundred feet from them. It was too late. Maeder shut off the controller, threw the train into reverse, and set the emergency brake, which automatically opened the door. Maeder jumped as did a few others including Speedrail employee George





regarded as being at fault for running a red signal, but the judge determined that Maeder and some other Speedrail employees were at most negligent, which does not support criminal charges.

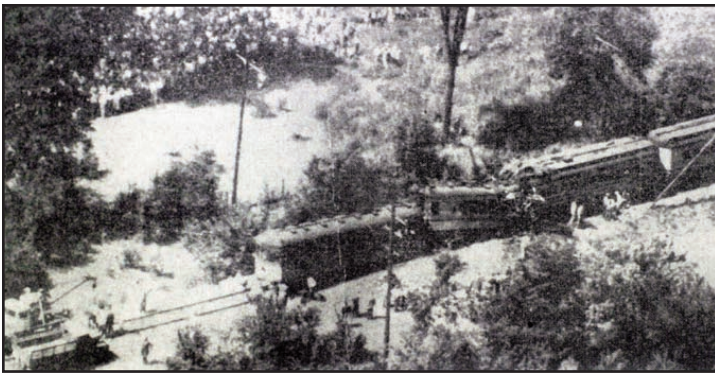
So many factors were involved in this disaster that it is beyond the scope of this article to list them all. The special trips were tightly scheduled even knowing that photo run-bys were going to occur. There were statements -- disputed by Nachod itself -- that the Nachod signal system had a peculiarity: if two trains entered a block at the same time it would briefly show a white "clear" signal but then would either show red or

Gloff. Both trains had been doing about 30 mph but Gloff (later an art director for Kalmbach Publishing) believed the 39-40 had slowed to about 15 mph and the 1192-1193 to about 25 mph at time of impact. The 1192-93 was so much taller than 39-40 that the horizontal-ribbed "anti-climbers" on the fronts were too mis-matched to work at all. And 1192-1193 was so much heavier than 39-40 that at impact it continued rolling through the body and frame to about halfway through the car. Eight were killed instantly; two died later of their injuries. Another 47 were injured, many seriously. Help arrived soon because a taxi driver had witnessed the collision and was able to call his dispatcher on his radio. The 39-40 was, essentially, scrapped on site. 1192-93 was considered repairable but Speedrail lacked the funds and it never ran again. Jay Maeder faced criminal prosecution from the Coroner's Jury and was popularly



go dark -- which was to be interpreted as equal to a red. Maeder was colorblind and may not have correctly interpreted a red signal. Some safety precautions were over-ridden at the last minute by Speedrail employees trying to keep the trains on schedule. Maeder had made a rather late attempt to introduce a hybrid form of timetable and train order operation just for that day's operations; Speedrail employees were not trained in or familiar with it, and Speedrail's communications system was not suited to it. There were allegations that some testimony at hearings was inaccurate or untruthful. Another accident, and problems in retaining and securing insurance, pretty much doomed Speedrail after the disaster. Maeder was no longer involved. Interestingly, its bankruptcy trustee



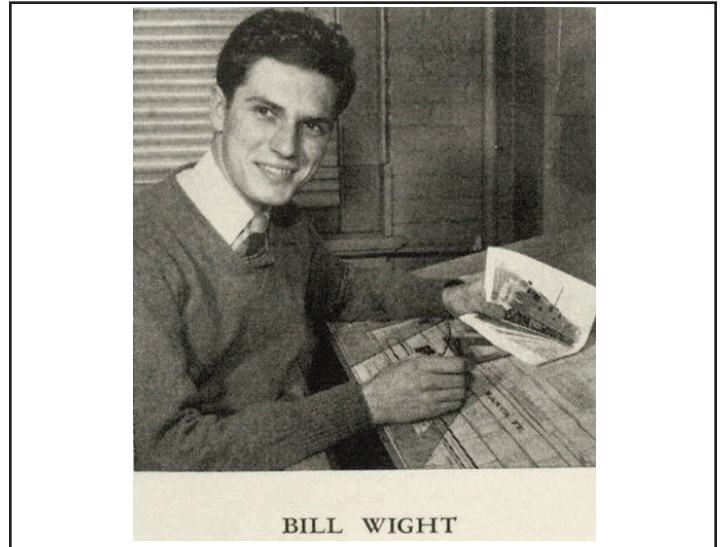


injured); William Roberts; Charles Sulzbach; William Wight (a Model Railroader magazine art staffer, recently married with an infant daughter); John Williams; and Gerald Greer (Speedrail employee). Among the most seriously injured were LeRoy Equitz, the motorman on 1192-93 who lost part of a leg; Harry Bondurant a well-known and innovative traction modeler in Milwaukee; and Cecil Vaughn of Ohio whose layout and modeling were featured in major modeling magazines.

had to consider rival proposals to acquire the line and keep it running, and one of the better proposals was from Jay Maeder. The trustee determined that the traveling public would regard any involvement of Maeder as an indication that Speedrail was unsafe, and he rejected it. Eventually it was determined that Speedrail could not be made into a going concern, and it was liquidated.

Needless to say, any enjoyable aspect of the NMRA's convention was eliminated by this disaster; the banquet was replaced by a quiet meal with talks by a priest and a minister. But the NMRA still had a role to play. It organized an immediate blood drive among the convention goers, worked to find places to stay for the many out of town relatives coming to aid their injured family members. The local NMRA also saw to it that all hospitalized persons from out of town received regular visits to keep their spirits up and offered transportation and even places to stay for family members. Only later did the NMRA realize that it had dodged a ruinous financial bullet: the riders on the special trains had all bought their tickets directly from Speedrail. Had the NMRA purchased the tickets and then resold them to convention goers, the NMRA would have shared liability with Speedrail and Speedrail's insurer! It was a different era and an editorial about the disaster in the October 1950 issue of Model Railroader contains this naive comment: "Speedrail carried \$500,000 in liability insurance which should cover the financial liability involved." For ten dead? For 47 wounded some of whom spent months in the hospital? No, it did not cover it--not nearly.

The dead: Emil "Pop" Beck (a famous pioneer NMRA member and organizer of passenger train trips to NMRA conventions); Huntley Burroughs; William Greenaway; Raymond Kratt; Marian Kratt (Raymond's wife; three other Kratts were seriously



BILL WIGHT

Sources for this article include:
 Larry Sakar, "Speedrail - Milwaukee's Last Rapid Transit?" (Interurban Press 1991);
 John Page, "At the Throttle: Ten Killed, 47 Injured When Interurban Fan Trip Trains Collide at Milwaukee NMRA Convention Labor Day Weekend," (Model Railroader October 1950, p. 11);
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 George Gloff, "An Eyewitness Account," (Model Railroader April 1987, p. 37);
 Joe Russ, "The NMRA Speedrail Wreck of 1950," found at
<http://my.execpc.com/~jruss/NMRASpeedrail.html>



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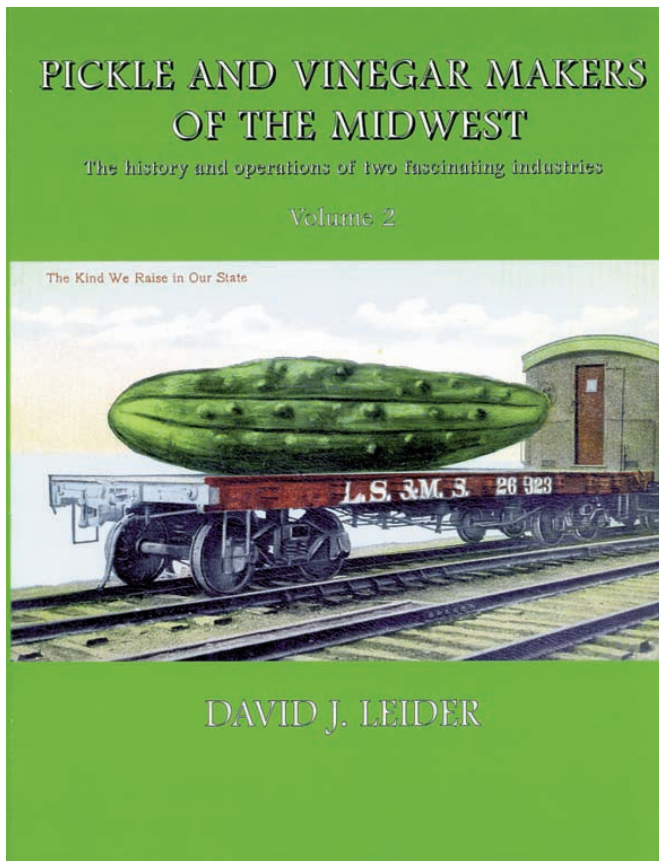
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